

**REMARKS**

Claims 8, 9, 12 and 17-26 remain in this application. Claims 10, 11, and 13-16 were previously withdrawn as a result of an election pursuant to a restriction requirement and these claims are now cancelled in the present Amendment. However, the Applicants reserve the right to file a continuation application on one or more of these claims at the appropriate time, overall claims 1-7, 10-12 and 13-16 are cancelled. Claim 12 has been amended. The remaining claims are unchanged. No new subject matter is believed to have been added by this Amendment.

On page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite since it recites that the guide gas supply passes through an end of the furnace “distal to the opening of the discharge pipe”. This phrase has been amended to specify that the guide gas supply passes through an end of the furnace “spaced from the opening of the discharge pipe”. This change is believed to provide clarification and to overcome this rejection.

On page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the teaching of U.S. Patent No. 4,816,289 to Komatsu et al. (“the Komatsu patent”). The Komatsu patent is directed to a process for production of a carbon filament utilizing a tubular electric furnace 13 having a furnace core tube 12 transversely mounted inside the tubular electric furnace 13. Discharge gas 16 is discharged through the pipe 15 disposed at one end of the furnace core tube 12. The furnace core tube 12 extends beyond the boundaries of the electric furnace 13. The discharge pipe 15 of the Komatsu patent extends into the furnace core tube 12 but does not extent into the electric furnace 13. Claim 12 of the subject application clearly states that the discharge pipe is positioned to be at least partially within the furnace of the tubular reactor. For that reason, the

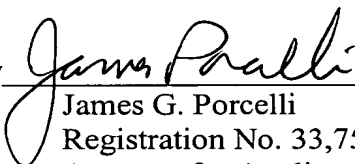
Application No. 10/070,109  
Amendment Dated: November 12, 2004  
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Attorney Docket No. 1852-020369

Applicants do not believe that the Komatsu patent either teaches or makes obvious the device as found in claim 12 of the present invention. Claim 12 has been further amended to specify that the guide gas passes through the end of the furnace in a direction countercurrent to the direction of the flow of gas through the discharge pipe. This is an additional distinction not found in the Komatsu patent and further supports the patentable distinction of claim 12 over the teaching of the Komatsu patent.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claim 12 and allowance of claims 8, 9, 12 and 17-26 are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

WEBB ZIESENHEIM LOGSDON  
ORKIN & HANSON, P.C.

By   
James G. Porcelli  
Registration No. 33,757  
Attorney for Applicants  
700 Koppers Building  
436 Seventh Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1818  
Telephone: 412-471-8815  
Facsimile: 412-471-4094  
E-mail: [webblaw@webblaw.com](mailto:webblaw@webblaw.com)